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ABSTRACT

Concurring that the more sociology and history draw upon each other's discipline, the better for both, this paper argues that the study of mass media presentations of deviance is one line of inquiry that lends itself to the realization of this dictum. The paper first explores some of the shortcomings that historians and sociologists share, noting that deviants have been regarded as people at the margins of clearly marked, relatively unchanging societal boundaries, when in fact the lines marking off deviance from conformity are typically fluid. The paper then discusses crises of symbols, in which deviance brings together in a sense of outrage an otherwise diverse community, and illustrates the point by using the crisis of symbols precipitated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other radical Black leaders, and the reconciliation of the crisis achieved by three American news magazines. The rhetorical strategies used to dilute their radicalism and achieve the reconciliation are then explored: contraposing--juxtaposing the subject with opposing symbols; contradistinguishing--contrasting the subject with a counterpart to establish the subject's credentials by calling those of the counterpart into question; consanquinity--manipulating symbols to erase symbolically the distinctions between two figures; reincorporation--the gradual absorption into the mainstream of once radical leaders or institutions; and conversion--depiction of deviants who return to the fold. The paper concludes by noting that media depictions of deviance serve to reaffirm American society as constituted. Thirty-four footnotes are appended. (HTH)

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MASS MEDIA AND DEVIANCE: EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES

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MASS MEDIA AND DEVIANCE: EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES

E.H. Carr performed a signal service some years back for both disciplines when he advised that the more sociological history becomes and the more historical sociology becomes, the better for both.[1] With some exceptions, that marriage—not of disciplines but of the strengths of each—has yet to be consummated, and both history and sociology seem the poorer for the lack of it.

The study of mass media presentations of deviance is one line of inquiry that lends itself to the realization of Carr's dictum. A scholarly enterprise of this sort demands the disciplinary strengths of both social scientists and historians. The former, for example, bring considerable conceptual sophistication to bear upon the problems of sorting out systematically the tangled processes of media-generated portrayals of deviance. Not least, social scientists, with their concern for generalizations, may teach a valuable lesson to the historian who neglects the counsel of Lord Acton that historians should study problems, not periods.

Yet the conceptual sophistication of the social scientist needs to be matched by the historian's sophisticated skills honed in the demanding task of tracking problems across time. That contribution would be no less important. The work produced thus far by social scientists too often has been limited by the tendency to fix media portraits of deviance at a particular historical moment with little or no sense of how and why these changed across time.[2] The skills of the historian thus are required in order to restore and maintain the critical balance between the general and the particular in scholarly inquiry.

While overlooking Carr's advice to seek out complementary strengths in each other's disciplines, historians and social scientists have tended to share other failings.[3] One is the metaphor of society as a firmly fixed structure. In an acerbic analysis written in a related context, Barrington Moore argued against a widespread assumption, which he placed in social science but is no less true of historians:

> There is a widespread assumption in modern social science that social continuity. . .is not problematical. Change is what requires explanation. . . .The assumption of inertia, that cultural and social continuity do not require explanation, obliterates the fact that both have to be recreated anew in each generation, often with great pain and suffering. To maintain and transmit a value system, human beings are punched, bullied, sent to jail, thrown into concentration camps, cajoled, bribed, made into heroes, encouraged to read newspapers, stood up against a wall and shot, and sometimes even taught sociology.[4]

Not surprisingly, therefore, deviants have been regarded as people at the margins of clearly marked, relatively unchanging societal boundaries. More typically, however, the lines marking off deviance from conformity are fluid, and subject always to shading, hedging, qualifying, and balancing in some startling ways.

Another characteristic often shared by historians and many social scientists, the former more than the latter, has been insensitivity to the fluidity of language[5] and the symbolically constructed boundaries of social groups--what Stuart Hall describes more generally as "maps of meaning that must be continuously revised and amended to 'cover' new events," and that "tend to 'rule in' and 'rule out'" assorted interpretations. Coming into play at this point is the "integrative, clarifying, and legitimating power" of mass media, registering most forcefully in circumstances which are "unfamiliar, problematic, or threatening: where no 'traditional wisdom,' no firm networks of personal influence, no cohensive culture, no precedents for relevant action

or response, and no first-hand way of testing or validating the propositions are [available] to confront or modify their innovatory power."[6]

In few areas is the integrative, clarifying, and legitimating power of media demonstrated more dramatically, or subtly, than in the study of mass media and deviance. This paper discusses certain problems of perspective that have tended to limit such scholarly inquiries and suggests the study of certain processes in portrayals of deviance (and methodological problems arising as a consequence). These processes are the reconciliation of crises of symbols; the reincorporation of former dissidents and radicals; and the symbolically important depictions of contrition and conversion.

Crisis of Symbols

Least studied of the processes is the crisis of symbols, the demand for the reconciliation of which arises from the central dilemma of American society. Confronted by the problems of diversity, Americans have had to struggle to create the essential element of national unity out of diversity itself. The dilemma is as old as the Republic, but, as Sacvan Bercovitch argued in another context, "Modern communities. . .have as much need for spiritual cohesion as did communities of the past."[7]

One process through which cohesion is built in a community is the act of deviance. As Kai Erikson, following Durkheim, observed:

> The deviant individual violates rules of conduct which the rest of the community holds in high respect; and when these people come together to express their outrage over the offense and to bear witness against the offender, they develop a tighter bond of solidarity than existed earlier. The excitement generated by the crime, in other words, quickens the tempo of interaction in the group and creates a climate in which the private sentiments of many separate persons are fused together into a common sense of morality.[8]

The sense that emerges from this is that deviance is beneficial to society inasmuch as it fosters cohesiveness. The condemnation heaped upon deviants, those whose words or actions exceed the boundaries of acceptable social and political conduct, actually reifies those boundaries. The problem with this functionalist perspective is that it declines to entertain the obvious question--functional for whom?--and provides "little or no accounting of [deviance's] harmful or dysfunctional effects."[9]

The significance of such unasked questions arises in the study of crises of symbols. The exigency is precipitated by a symbolic figure or figures of such significance to the culture that the crisis demands reconciliation, perhaps most of all by the news media. "Both dramatic and 'meaningless' within the consensually validated norms," the crisis of symbols breaches expectancies and renders "problematic not only how the political world is defined, but how it ought to be."[10]

The best example of the reconciliation of a crisis of symbols[11] is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the black leader who assumed the mantle of a prophet of equality and brotherhood for more than a decade. As important as his standing as a symbol in the American culture was the fact that the strains of reform and radicalism marked King's career on the public stage. King was a reformer during the Southern civil rights movement, beginning with the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-56 and extending through the Selma voting rights campaign of 1965, both of which he led. What King sought to accomplish then was anything but radical, save to recalcitrant segregationists. He wished to secure for the black Southerner political rights and social freedoms that by and large were freely available to his brethren elsewhere in America.

But there was a later, more radical King. After the conclusion of the movement in Selma, King sought a wider stage. His campaigns were as ambitious as the scale of his new activism on the national and international stage. One of his ventures outside the South was the Chicago Freedom Movement of 1966. King led a coalition that attacked some of the manifestations of de facto discrimination, especially the entrenched practices that produced segregated housing patterns in the nation's second largest city. The movement failed disastrously. In 1965, King had spoken out, rather mildly, for a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam war. Stung by the resulting criticism, he retreated from the issue for almost two years. In 1967, he resumed and escalated his criticism of the American war in Vietnam, likening certain American military tactics to the genocidal practices of the concentration camps of the Third Reich. Finally, in 1968, the year of his death, King set in motion a class-structured social movement, the Poor People's Campaign, that was intended to include black, white, red, and brown Americans united in their poverty and the determination to take radical measures to end it. He intended to push Gandhian nonviolence to its ultimate limits of civil disruption and disobedience, including, if necessary, crippling some of the public functions of some major cities in the United States. Before he could lead the Poor People's Campaign, King was murdered while enmeshed in a minor labor strike conducted by a predominantly black union of municipal employees in Memphis.[12]

In effect, then, King's earlier reformist activities reaffirmed American ideals which held Jim Crow to be abhorrent. Later, however, he raised what amounted to a radical challenge to the nation, not merely to one region. Furthermore, that challenge emerged during a period of almost unprecedented

social upheaveal which shattered the decorum of American public life. Robert H. Wiebe best caught the sense of the turbulent 1960s:

> Exchanges that had customarily been veiled in euphemism now exploded in encounters. Angry people cried racism, not prejudice, mass murder, not global strategy, male chauvinist pigs, not. . .rude men; and their tactics required confrontations with the enemy, not discussions with the opposition. Restraints everywhere were disappearing.[13]

The combination of King's radicalism and the volatile temper of the times precipitated a crisis of symbols. Its reconciliation was achieved—at least by the three American news magazines--by diluting almost to the point of invisibility the later radicalism of King, and, as well, by offering King as a symbol to counter other radicals, in particular, those in the black movement who had their own challenges to American society underway in the late 1960s.[14]

The use of King as a contrasting symbol suggests that a number of rhetorical strategies were employed in order to make sense of him for readers. These are assembled under the rubric of the arraying of symbolic figures.

In the perceptive analysis of August Meier, King occupied "a position of strategic importance as the 'vital center' within the civil rights movement," securing support not only because of his charismatic appeal and his success in making civil rights a respectable cause, but because of the activities and rhetoric of more militant elements on the left, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Congress of Racial Equality.[15] Meier indeed locates the central source of King's strength as a symbolic figure, but his analysis was written in 1965, before King moved from reform to radicalism. Furthermore, the number of rhetorical strategies employed to explain King and the ways in which they were used by the news magazines add up to a more complex, often contradictory portrait that emerged over time. Three types of strategies appeared as a result of my analysis, these being contraposing,

contradistinguishing, and the arraying of symbols in order to establish consanguinity.

Contraposing

The most striking, the most common, and the simplest of the rhetorical strategies was contraposing. By placing two symbols side by side, journalists both clarify a complex situation and strip it of nuances. Media array symbols that can be painted in distinct shades of good and evil, or, more commonly in a political context, as moderate against radical, or moderate versus conservative. The intent usually is to demonstrate the existence and the efficacy of an alternative to the evil exposed in the act of contraposing. As Kai Erikson explains, symbolic encounters "between the new deviants and the older agents of control provide a forum, as it were, in which the issue can be articulated more clearly, a stage on which it can be portrayed in sharper relief."[16]

The list of opposing symbols with whom King was juxtaposed is lengthy. As is to be expected, he was often contraposed against the segregationists with whom he struggled in the Southern civil rights movement between 1956 and 1965, especially Governor George Wallace of Alabama, Bull Connor, the fire and police commissioner of Birmingham, and Sheriff James Clark of Dallas County, the county in which the Selma campaign was conducted.[17] The list is at least as long, however, when it comes to other symbolic figures perceived as more militant or radical. Indeed, King was contraposed against "radicals" of all stripes from black America. Even a partial listing would have to include Malcolm X of the separatist Black Muslims, Harlem Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, and Stokely Carmichael and Floyd McKissick, who were major figures in

the Black Power movement of the middle 1960s as the leaders, respectively, of SNCC and the Congress of Racial Equality.[18]

Any analysis of contraposed symbols is likely to lead to the objection that the news stories in question merely reflected the opposing positions of the two individuals. That counterargument misses the changes wrought in the process of contraposing in order to achieve symbolic clarity. As an example, there is the rhetorical strategy of contraposing followed by each of the news magazines after King's assassination. Symbolic clarity was achieved by making Stokely Carmichael of SNCC the opposing symbol to King in the overwhelming majority of such references. To be sure, there were significant differences between King and Carmichael, particularly when it came to the question of nonviolence. On the other hand, the two black leaders had reached an agreement whereby Carmichael would support in some way the Poor People's Campaign in Washington. Even more to the point, King and Carmichael had shared a cause, the anti-war movement, and while alive King was sharply criticized for entering into this association with Carmichael. These matters, which would have beclouded the symbolism attached to King after his death, were not mentioned.[19]

Nor is it the case that even starkly drawn opposing positions will necessarily lead to contrapositioning. One such instance appears in the reply of former President Truman to a reporter's question about King after the Selma campaign. "'A troublemaker,' snorted Harry. Next day, HST lashed out again, calling the Nobel Prize-winning Negro leader a 'rabble-rouser' who acted 'like a damn fool.' The march on Montgomery? All it did, snapped Truman, was disturb the peace." The extremes of position obviously existed, but contraposing was impossible; in fact, Time and Newsweek, which reported

Truman's statements, were forced to deal with a first-class dilemma. They had to make sense of the embarrassing spectacle of one of the living symbols of the Republic, Truman, describing another, King, as a "trouble-maker," "rabble-rouser," and "damn fool" because the latter had led a crusade for freedom.[20]

Contradistinguishing

Symbolic figures may also be arrayed for other purposes. One is to distinguish between two symbolic figures by contrasting them. A symbol of moderation, the ideological position of choice in the United States, may be placed symbolically beside another symbol whose radicalism is well-established. The intent is not so much to darken the tones of radicalism of the latter as it is to erase any doubts about the moderate virtues of the former. This process may appear, for example, when the moderate's actions or statements call into question his standing as a symbol.

A striking example of the strategy appears in the contradistinguishing of King and Ralph David Abernathy, King's successor as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Inevitably, there were comparisons of the different styles of King and Abernathy as leaders and speakers, and Abernathy emerged as the lesser of the two. However unfair to Abernathy, such judgments were neither inaccurate (Abernathy was indeed rough hewn, measured against King) nor inappropriate journalistically, given King's extraordinary prominence. But the process of contradistinguishing went much further; by demonstrating what Abernathy was, the news magazines, especially Time and Newsweek, could demonstrate what King was not.

The effect was to establish King's credentials as a moderate by calling Abernathy's into question. For instance, Time grumbled during the Poor People's Campaign of Abernathy's "unhappy tendency to. . .accept bad advice

from ultramilitant officials whom King managed to keep in line." Thereafter, Abernathy became in Time the "pretender to the role of Martin Luther King" who spinelessly acquiesced in the process of bending the Poor People's Campaign "toward civil disobedience" and, in Newsweek, he was depicted as presiding over "an ill-housed, ill-fed, self-segregated, absentee-run slum afflicted with low morale, deepening restiveness, and free-floating violence." Underlying such statements was the implication that the Poor People's Campaign would have developed much differently had King lived, and perhaps that was true. But many of the problems of the Poor People's Campaign were due simply to bad management, and King, no administrator, as even his friends conceded, probably would have been no more effective than Abernathy in this respect. While relieving King of the responsibility for the failure of the Poor People's Campaign, the magazines also sought to remove the stigma of radicalism from him. Another implication was that the campaign drifted into radicalism—toward civil disobedience—and that this was different from what King had in mind. In fact, what King had in mind was a good deal more radical than what Abernathy was able to bring off—escalating the campaign into civil disobedience on a scale that would paralyze some of the key public functions of Washington and other major cities; plague after plague would be visited upon the national government and the white power structure, said King, until they yielded and provided justice to the poor of America.[21] If indeed the Poor People's Campaign would have gone differently had King been alive, it is at least possible that he would have pressed it to the radical lengths that Abernathy could not or would not go.[22]

Consanguinity

Contrapositioning and contradistinguishing draw lines separating two symbolic figures. By contrast, the establishment of consanguinity, which often requires some degree of manipulation of symbols, essentially erases symbolically the distinctions between them.

The most familiar form is a variant of guilt by association; that is to say, the radicalism of one symbolic figure spills over and colors the image of the second. U.S. News & World Report sometimes employed this tactic against King by pairing him with symbols such as Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. As the most conservative of the news magazines, it was to be expected that U.S. News would use such tactics against King. In fact, however, Time and Newsweek used the same tactic of establishing consanguinity. For example, Time coined the useful phrase, "King, Carmichael & Co." in order to establish the kindred radicalism of those two opponents of the Vietnam war.[23]

If connate guilt can be established, the opposite is true as well: virtue can be demonstrated consanguineously. The bitter criticism leveled at the American war in Vietnam by King in 1967 was obscured by Time when it associated him with a less impassioned critic of the war, Whitney Young of the Urban League. At first glance, the strategy actually appears to be one of contrast, if not contraposing, inasmuch as Time received more tolerantly the fact that Young "personally regrets the size and cost of the U.S. commitment" in Vietnam while complaining that King made the "simplistic argument. . .that an end to the war would instantly transfer billions of dollars to the cities." In fact, consanguinity permitted Time to pass over the far more controversial elements of King's comparison of American military tactics to the genocidal practices of Nazi Germany. What do the Vietnamese peasants think, King asked

rhetorically in his Riverside Church speech in 1967, "as we test out our latest weapons on them, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe?[24]

Similar in principle were the lines of consanguinity that Time and Newsweek drew following the assassination of King in 1968 in order to associate him symbolically with President Kennedy, who was assassinated five years earlier. This was one of a number of editorial devices used to dilute the radicalism of King before his death.[25]

Reincorporation

Reincorporation of former dissidents is another process associated with media presentations of deviance. Unlike the crisis of symbols, which demands almost immediate reconciliation, reincorporation appears to be a matter of relatively gradual absorption into the mainstream of once radical leaders or institutions. Unlike the process of conversion, which it resembles, acts of contrition or conversion probably are not usually found in reincorporation. In fact, reincorporation probably occurs most frequently when contrition or conversion is impossible for one reason or another, or when the actions or political position that once put a dissident outside the pale have been accepted, grudgingly or otherwise, within the mainstream of society. For the reason that media engage in the process of reincorporation, one need look no further than the truism that the genius of the American system lies in its capacity to absorb and neutralize radicalism.[26]

Reincorporation is illustrated by the particular case of Malcolm X, the brilliant and charismatic black leader who was for most of his public career the leading prosletyzer of the Nation of Islam, the black separatist sect commonly known as the Black Muslims.

Intense symbolism was attached to Malcolm X during the black movement of the late 1950s and the 1960s. He advocated armed self-defense for blacks in contrast to the Gandhian nonviolence espoused by King. Equally as important, Malcolm X preached the Muslim doctrine that whites were members of a perverted and twisted race. Such preachments made Malcolm X a fascinating and frightening figure in contemporary American society. In 1963, he was suspended by Elijah Muhammad, the chief minister of the Muslims, because of a derogatory statement made following the assassination of President Kennedy. The relationship of the two men continued to worsen until in 1964 Malcolm X announced that he had broken his ties with the Nation of Islam. After a trip to the Middle East in the spring of 1964, he returned to the United States and, attributing his change of heart to the influence of Islamic principles and contact with fellow Moslems, essentially repudiated the doctrine of hatred of whites. He was assassinated in February of the following year while speaking to a crowd of followers in New York.[27]

A cursory reading suggests that Malcolm X was depicted essentially as a "devil figure" by mainstream news media before and for some period after his murder in 1965,[28] but that his image was later redrawn, and he came to be presented as an important black leader who was a relatively benign force in American society.

Time magazine provides vivid examples that, in the absence of an extended study, support the thesis that there was a reincorporation of Malcolm X. Immediately after his assassination, Time characterized Malcolm X as a former "pimp, a cocaine addict, and a thief." Lest readers believe he might have reformed, Time did two things. First it published police mug shots taken of Malcolm X twenty-one years before. Then Time added statements to the effect

that not only had Malcolm X not reformed, he had become something even worse than a pimp, cocaine addict, or thief—"an unashamed demagogue" whose gospel was hatred and whose creed was violence.[29]

Three years later Time repeated essentially the same theme in an article reporting the commemoration of the third anniversary of the death of Malcolm X. It mocked him as the "uhuru guru," and complained that militant remarks by the "apostles of Malcolm X made their prophet's own speeches" appear restrained by comparison.[30]

By 1970, five years after the assassination, Time started to reinterpret, thus reincorporate, Malcolm X. The vehicle chosen for this purpose was a review of three books written about his life or career. "His incitements to revolution drew a disproportionate amount of attention during his lifetime," the review noted, with irony that was perhaps unintended. "But the angry and occasionally outrageous things that he said seemed wilder then than they do today." As a matter of fact, it now appeared to Time that his "last plan to start working with all civil rights and human rights groups in the U.S. shows how far beyond the raw appeals to violence and references to 'blue-eyed white devils' Malcolm X actually went."[31]

Malcolm X does not exhaust the range of possibilities for a study of reincorporation. An agenda for studies might be drawn to include other symbolic figures[32], or institutions and organizations such as the Black Muslims and, more remote in time, the Mormons, the latter being one of the most persecuted religious sects in American history during its formative years.

Conversion

The final process to be discussed is conversion; that is to say, the depiction in the mass media of deviants who return to the fold.

In researching media presentations of conversion, the scholar is immediately confronted by the premise that a conversion did in fact occur and the natural argument that journalists simply recounted the facts of the repentance. For several reasons, the matter may not be as simple as that. To begin, as Kai Erikson observed in a related context, repentance is not only a private act of contrition but a public ceremony of admission. "To repent is to agree that the moral standards of the community are right and that . . .one has 'sinned against his own conscience' and entirely understands why the community has to punish or even kill him."[33] In fine, attention is shifted from individual motivation to the strain accompanying conversion, the reaffirmation of community or societal standards as correct and just.

Thus the research problem begins rather than ends with the act of conversion, and sorting out the various elements of the media accounts from the actual phases of the individual's (or organization's) evolution toward and away from deviance becomes the principal methodological problem. To put it another way, the scholar must determine whether or not the stories merely reflected the attitudes and actions of the convert.

More specific questions remain to be resolved. The first is why instances of <u>individual</u> conversions should attract the attention of the news media.

Former political radicals figured in many instances of conversion. One was the former Yippie of the 1960s, Jerry Rubin, described by <u>Newsweek</u> as one of the "stand-up subversives who urged the American young, all in fun, to

murder their parents and mistrust anybody over 30." Rubin conceded in 1977 that the radicals of his generation were in a way "revolting against ourselves—that's why we were so good at it. I was the screwed up, middle-class monster I was railing against." But no more: Rubin had abandoned his preoccupation with "the state of the masses of the world," choosing instead to enroll in "a seminar in Money Consciousness, and would not at all mind graduating at the head of his class."[34]

Converted radicals seemed at one time to fascinate some elements of the press, a phemonenon which can be explained partially because many once were highly visible newsmakers. Others were not. Time, for instance, reported the conversion of otherwise obscure hippies who settled in a remote town in Colorado in the 1970s and, by 1985, had become "'just like our dads were,'" complete with the financial impedimenta of the middle class, mortgages and real estate investments.[35] Furthermore, even the most infamous of the radicals of the 1960s usually had vanished from the public stage long before any recorded act of contrition or conversion, and the intense coverage of their reappearances ran contrary to the decided preference among journalists for history in the making over history already made.

One useful research tool for getting at this question is embedded in the concept of news currency. As Bernard Roshco explains, access to the news media is facilitated by previous appearance in media reports: ". . .only that which is deemed sufficiently newsworthy is published and gains widespread currency—among newsmen as much as the public; as currency grows, newsmen become more attentive and visibility is enhanced."[36]

The example of Eldridge Cleaver may illustrate this point. Cleaver, probably best known as the author of Soul on Ice, a radical indictment of the

American political and social system that was published in the 1960s, was a former high minister of the radical Black Panthers. Cleaver fled the United States to escape prosecution; after some years abroad, he returned to the United States, announcing that he had undergone a religious conversion.

The researcher would need to establish systematically the news currency of Cleaver during at least three phases: the period during which he was associated with the Black Panthers; the time spent abroad as an expatriate radical; and finally, the period encompassing his conversion and return to the United States. The analysis of news currency may be differential, as in the weighting of Cleaver's visibility as a newsmaker during each of the three periods, or comparative, as in the examination of Cleaver's currency with other former Black Panther radicals who did not undergo conversion, or (probably the most productive) some research strategy that draws on both types of analyses.

In addition to analysis of news currency, close textual analysis, in combination with research independent of content, may yield shed light on media presentations of conversion. For example, someone presented as a convert may not necessarily embrace with unvarying enthusiasm all values of the society that he or she is joining.[37] The convert's statements could be examined closely for pronouncements construed as critical of the society's failures or shortcomings; if any appear, they would then be compared to the reportage of the act of conversion. Various tones or editorial strategies such as silence, ambiguity, or emphasis and de-emphasis may emerge as a result. Even reports which include elements critical of the society should be scrutinized carefully in order to determine from which point on a scale,

ranging from most objectionable to least objectionable, the critical material was selected.[38]

Nor should it be assumed necessarily that an act of conversion is never reversed, nor, indeed, that actual conversion occurred. Instead, the conversion may be symbolic rather than actual. Illustrative is the case of John Lewis, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the 1960s. Lewis had outraged Time during the 1963 March on Washington with the demand for freedom now, and raised its hackles early in 1966 when he delivered himself of a "typically intemperate statement" attacking the war in Vietnam. After Lewis lost to the election in 1966 for the chairmanship of SNCC to the more militant Stokely Carmichael, Time accomplished a symbolic conversion of Lewis. He became, in Time's account, one of the few SNCC leaders who had "welcomed white members and ventured some cooperation with less militant civil rights organizations," and, even more approvingly after Lewis resigned from SNCC, an independent-minded man who "refused to parrot the black-power line" of SNCC under Carmichael[39]—all of which was true, to be sure, but these were not matters that concerned Time until Lewis was replaced by Carmichael.

Conclusion

Two threads run through these symbolic processses. The first is that individuals and organizations represented political, social, or religious deviance, or some mixture of two or more strains. The second is that media depictions of deviance serve to reaffirm American society as constituted. The latter radicalism of King was diluted to the point that he passed into the American pantheon not as a radical but as a social reformer whose words and deeds reify the best of America, the ideals identified by Gunnar Myrdal as the

components of the American Creed. Malcolm X, no doubt others as well, was reincorporated as a figure from a useable past, the history of a nation struggling to put its ideals into practice. The radicals of the 1960s became converts to Americanism, thereby offering powerful proof--as penitent prodigal sons--of the correctness and justice of the American social system.

The processes of reconciling crises of symbols, of reincorporating and of reporting the conversion of former dissidents and radicals in symbolically unmarred images are, no doubt, far more fluid in practice than as illustrated here. For that and other reasons, this paper is neither definitive nor exhaustive but exploratory. The intent was to stimulate debate about research into deviance, how it is presented by the mass media, and the role played by the media in creating and maintaining cohesion in American society by making sense of symbols.

Robert Wiebe once recommended that historians seek out lines of tension in American society and their particular intersections in American history. That advice seems no less appropriate for historians and social scientists who study mass media, and who should be no less concerned with the central question of how a society is able to establish and maintain itself across time.

An important way of getting at that question is the study of media and deviance, whether in contemporary America or the America of the penny press era when the foundations of the modern press were laid. To this enterprise, media historians can bring the fruits of research into deviance by social scientists, in particular sociologists. At the same time, historians can add another, equally critical dimension too often lacking in social science research, this being a sophisticated understanding of how historical problems,

tracked across time, offer the potential of a rich yield. That harvest includes--or should include--both the historical particulars and the historical generalizations, as well as the sense of how both change across time under the impetus of social forces and the accidents of history.

NOTES

[1]E.H. Carr, What Is History? (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 84.

[2]As in, e.g., the description of "vanguard elements" such as the "'black power' militants [that] clearly speak and organize on behalf of the disenfranchized black majorities of the Deep South and the disadvantaged poor of the urban ghettos." Stuart Hall, "Deviance, Politics, and the Media," in Deviance and Social Control, eds. Paul Rock and Mary McIntosh (London: Tavistock Publications, 1974), p. 270. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was the organization most directly associated with the Black Power ideology. The statement accurately characterizes SNCC between 1966 and 1968, but it misses SNCC's evolution from reform to radicalism between 1960 and 1966, not to mention the numerous and complex factors, which included intense clashes of culture and ideology, that affected the evolution. The best treatment of SNCC is Clayborne Carson, In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

[3]For this discussion I am greatly indebted to John Pauly's close and insightful criticism of an earlier version of this paper.

[4]Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), pp. 485-486.

[5]In the documentary approach to texts that dominates historiography, the text becomes "little more than a sign of the times or a straightforward expression of one larger phenomenon or another." Dominick LaCapra, Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 14. See also pp. 14-15, 23-71, passim.

[6]See Hall, pp. 277, 299-300.

[7]Sacvan Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 140.

[8]Kai T. Erikson, Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966), p. 4.

[9]The quotation is from Stuart H. Traub and Craig B. Little, "Functionalism," in Theories of Deviance, eds. Stuart H. Traub and Craig B. Little (Itasca, Ill.: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1975), p. 2. For more detailed critiques, see, e.g., Stephen J. Pfohl, Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), pp. 177-195, passim, and Jock Young, "Beyond the Consensual Paradigm: A Critique of Left Functionalism in Media Theory," in The Manufacture of News: Deviance, Social Problems, and the Mass Media, Rev. Edit., eds. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (London: Constable; Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1981), pp. 393-421.

[10]Hall, p. 274.

[11]I suggest tentatively several possibilities for study. One is the press response to Patricia Hearst, the newspaper heiress kidnapped by the Symbionese

Liberation Army in February of 1974; a crisis of symbols may have been precipitated when Hearst, taking the revolutionary name of Tania, taped statements announcing that she voluntarily joined the SLA. The story of a young woman of wealth and name embracing publicly the cause and revolutionary ardor of her captors certainly seems the sort to breach expectancies. I have been unable to locate a scholarly account of the Hearst affair. Her account of the captivity and participation in and later renunciation of the SLA, is Patricia Campbell Hearst with Alvin Moscow, Every Secret Thing (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1982), pp. 86-87, 96-100, 402-403, 443, and passim.

Another crisis of symbols may have been arisen during the Korean war. Much controversy surrounded what was regarded as widespread instances of collaboration by Americans held as prisoners-of-war, and following the implementation of a truce, the refusal of twenty-one Americans, thereafter infamous as turncoats, to accept repatriation. Although the instances of collaboration and defections lacked any military or strategic significance, and were not unprecedented in American history, it is likely that they produced a shock that registered in American society because of the ideological tensions in the cockpit of the Cold War. Perspective on the collaboration and defections is provided by William Lindsay White, who notes that about three hundred and fifty soldiers in Communist captivity refused repatriation while approximately eighty-eight thousand prisoners held by United Nations forces declined repatriation. Captives of Korea (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 330. A starting point is provided by Albert D. Biderman, who found press coverage organized in three major themes, atrocities, "brainwashing," and misconduct. See March to Calumny: The Story of American POW's in the Korean War (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), pp. 189-201.

Another example may be found in the British press reaction, beginning in the 1950s and extending into the 1970s, to the discoveries that several British public servants had been spying for the Soviet Union for a number of years. The potential for a crisis of symbols arises out of the fact that Soviet agents recruited the British spies from the privileged elite in a nation in which nuances of class remain exceedingly important determinants of social, political, and economic status. The best appreciation I have read is John Le Carre, "Introduction" to Bruce Page, David Leitch, and Phillip Knightley, The Philby Conspiracy (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), pp. 1-16. See also, Patrick Seale and Maureen McConville, Philby: The Long Road to Moscow (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

[12]On the Chicago Freedom Movement, see David L. Lewis, King: A Biography, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), pp. 343-344, 351. For King's Riverside Church speech against the war in Vietnam, see Martin Luther King, Jr., Speeches by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., about the War in Vietnam (New York: Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, n.d.), p. 6. King Center archives, Atlanta, Box 28, File 43. The best source on the Poor People's Campaign is Charles Fager, Uncertain Resurrection: The Poor People's Washington Campaign (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1969), see esp. pp. 16-19.

[13]Robert H. Wiebe, The Segmented Society: An Introduction to the Meaning of America (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 7.

[14]Richard Lentz, "Resurrecting the Prophet: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the News Magazines (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1983), chapters 15-18, passim.

[15]August Meier, "The Conservative Militant," in Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Profile, ed. C. Eric Lincoln (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), p. 151. Not treated by Meier was the important role played by organizations on the right, the NAACP and the Urban League, which by virtue of their conservatism, prodded some moderates to support King, especially as the black movement became more militant.

[16]Erikson, pp. 68-69.

[17]The list of symbolic figures contraposed to King and the accompanying citations would be exceedingly lengthy. As a sampling, see Time, "Where the Stars Fall," 27 September 1963, pp. 17, 20, on George Wallace; "The Youngest Ever," 23 October 1964, p. 27, on Bull Connor; and "Challenging the Pharoah," 17 May 1968, p. 35, on Clark. One of the most striking was the symbolic use of Connor by Newsweek, "The Bull and the Dogs, 6 May 1968, p. 20.

[18]For a few examples, see the following. On the contraposing of King and Powell, see, Time, "People," 27 May 1957, p. 40; on Carmichael and McKissick, U.S. News & World Report, "Negro Leaders Dividing--The Effect," 18 July 1966, p. 32; the contrapositioning of Malcolm X is quite apparent in Time, "Freedom--Now," 17 May 1963, p. 23, and "Victory in Jail," 12 February 1965, p. 16.

[19]See Lentz, chapter 16, for a detailed discussion. As examples of the contraposing of King and Carmichael, see Time, "Transcendent Symbol," 12 April 1968, p. 19, and Newsweek, "'King is the Man, Oh Lord,'" 15 April 1968, p. 34.

[20]Truman's remarks are quoted in Newsweek, "Chip Off the Chippendale," 26 April 1965, pp. 28-29. See also, Time, "On the Avenue," 25 April 1965, p. 73. The two magazines resolved the dilemma by implying, though with noteworthy delicacy that Truman was all but senile.

[21]See, respectively, Time, "Ralph Abernathy: Out of the Shadow," 31 May 1968, p. 15, "Insurrection City," 14 June 1968, pp. 24-25; Newsweek, "'Let No One Be Denied,'" 1 July 1968, pp. 20-21, which made a point similar to Time's with the observation that "the campaign's bickersome leadership seemed to have no idea how to end the six-week show short of civil disobedience." On King and his plans for the Washington campaign, see, e.g., his speech to the SCLC convention in Atlanta, 15 August 1967, p. 10, King Center archives, Atlanta, Box 28, File 37.

[22]Another example of contradistinguishing appears in the way Newsweek gingerly handled stories about King's and SNCC's anti-war activities in 1965. SNCC's members were more militant than King in opposing the war in 1965. But Newsweek took pains to put as much distance as possible between King and SNCC. King's position on the war did not differ materially from President Johnson's,

Newsweek assured its readers, and, besides, King's words were just that—talk, not action. Furthermore, unlike SNCC, King was mindful of the dangers of expending "the moral capital built up by The [civil rights] Movement" by becoming mired in the war issue. In contrast to the pragmatic King, the hot-heads of SNCC had a habit of rushing into "controversies in which they are long on passion and short on expertise." In short, King could be counted on—as SNCC patently could not, in Newsweek's account—to act sensibly, to follow the way of moderation, and to avoid entering the camp of the "peaceniks," the word coined by Newsweek to stigmatize as un-American those who demonstrated against the war. "One War at a Time," 19 July 1965, pp. 22, 25. Naturally, King appeared far more sensible when juxtaposed with hot-heads.

[23]U.S. News & World Report, "A Summer of Race Violence on the Way?" 6 April 1964, p. 34, and Lewis F. Powell, "'Civil Disobedience: Prelude to Revolution'?" U.S. News & World Report, 30 October 1967, p. 66. Time, "The Dilemma of Dissent," 21 April 1967, p. 21. See also Emmet John Hughes, "A Curse of Confusion," Newsweek, 1 May 1967, p. 17, for much the same idea.

[24]Time, "The Other Ninety-Seven Percent," 11 August 1967, p. 17. See also, "Another Kind of Fighter," 18 August 1967, p. 22, in which Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown, but not King, were scourged for their opposition to the war. For King's statement, see King, Speeches by the Rev. Martin Luther King, p. 6.

[25]See Time, "An Hour of Need," 12 April 1968, p. 17, and Newsweek, "'King is the Man, Oh Lord,'" 15 April 1968, p. 38. Superficially, the deaths of King and Kennedy were similar. Still, it would be difficult to maintain that their perspectives, as, for example, on race, were the same. There were enormous changes in the black movement in the five years that separated the two assassinations, and King's social activism underwent alterations no less radical. King's own appreciation was that "no president has really done very much for the American Negro, though [Presidents Kennedy and Johnson] have received much undeserved credit for helping us." Martin Luther King, Jr., "A Testament of Hope," Playboy, January, 1969, p. 232.

[26]A critical leftist perspective is offered by Todd Gitlin, The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 290-291.

[27]For an appreciation of the movement of the social thought of Malcolm X, see The Autobiography of Malcolm X (New York: Grove Press, 1965), best read against George Breitman, ed., Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements (New York: Grove Press, 1965). See also, C. Eric Lincoln, My Face is Black, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 99-103, passim. Some insight may be gleaned as well concerning the departure of Malcolm X from the Black Muslims (although some of the information appears questionable) from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's "Surveillance File on Malcolm X" (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1978), reel 1, 17 February 1953-1964, reel 2, 31 March 1964-1971, no pp.

[28]A thesis which, with the exception of the New York Times, is largely supported by a geographically limited study by Jon A. Roosenraad, "Coverage in

Six New York Daily Newspapers of Malcolm X and His Black Nationalist Movement: A Study" (M.A. thesis, Michigan State University, 1968).

[29]Time, "Death and Transfiguration," 5 March 1965, p. 23.

[30]Time, "The Beatification of Malcolm X," 1 March 1968, p. 16.

[31]See Time, "Malcolm X: History as Hope," 23 February 1970," pp. 88, 90.

[32]Another possible example of media reincorporation is George Wallace, who was governor of Alabama during most of the major desegregation crises of the 1960s, including the Birmingham and Selma campaigns. Wallace had declared his determination to maintain "segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever," thus becoming a symbol of the evils of segregation on a par with Bull Connor, the fire and police commissioner of Birmingham during the civil rights campaign in that city, and Sheriff James Clark, who led a brutal attack on black demonstrators during the Selma voting rights movement. Whether due to political expediency or a change in personal attitudes or both, Wallace abandoned segregation in later years and even entered into something resembling a political coalition with black leaders in Alabama. From cursory reading, it appears that, like that of Malcolm X, the image of Wallace also underwent a sea change, and he came to be presented essentially as a relatively benign Southern Populist. For an interesting retrospective, see Time, "Twilight of the Firebrand," 14 April 1986, p. 31. Though dated, still one of the better contemporary treatments of Wallace as a Southern Populist is Marshall Frady, Wallace (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1968). Wallace's movement away from segregation is mentioned briefly by David J. Garrow, Protest in Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 314, n. 90.

[33]Erikson, p. 195.

[34]Newsweek, "Yippie for Money," 5 September 1977, pp. 29-30. See also Time, "Rubin Relents," 11 August 1980, p. 23, and Gitlin, pp. 150-152, for his citation of the coverage of another former political radical, Mark Rudd, who led the chapter of Students for a Democratic Society during the student uprising on the campus of Columbia University in 1968.

[35]Time, "Gentrifying a Mountain Paradise," 11 February 1985, p. 98.

[36]Bernard Roshco, Newsmaking (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 18.

[37]Useful for purposes of illustration by analogy is the case of the great Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. It would be misleading to describe Solzhenitsyn as a convert, although, in the essentials, he was so regarded in the West. Solzhenitsyn created an uproar among his admirers after he was expelled from the Soviet Union. As a biographer wrote, "it had been more or less taken from granted that all Soviet dissidents were pro-Western and in favour of a Western-style democracy, . . .It came as something of a shock, therefore, to discover that Solzhenitsyn was neither pro-Western nor a democrat, and that his principal allegiances were to 'God and Mother Russia'";

more specifically, Solzhenitsyn published variations on the Spenglerian theme of the decline of the West in which were mingled assertions of the superiority of traditional Russian over Western ways. For a discussion, see Michael Scammell, Solzhenitsyn: A Biography (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984), chapter 47, passim. The quotation appears on p. 868.

[38]This point may be seen in my analysis of the coverage of King's comparison of American military tactics to the genocidal practices employed in Nazi concentration camps. Somewhat later, his opposition to the war was converted from a question of morality to one of racial self-interest; i.e., the war was draining off money better spent to relieve the misery of the poor. Indeed, the latter was one of King's complaints against the war, but it was far less objectionable than his association of the American military with the concentration camps of the Third Reich.

[39]A fascinating, though challenging undertaking, would be a comparative, cross-cultural study of the press coverage in the Soviet Union and the United States following the defection of Svetlana Stalin to the United States and her return to the Soviet Union after a number of years. On the symbolic conversion of Lewis, see, respectively, Time, "The March's Meaning," 6 September 1963; "One Word Too Many," 21 January 1966, p. 20; "Thinking Big," 27 May 1966, p. 22; and "Black Power in the Red," 8 July 1966, p. 21. The resignation of Lewis might be considered roughly equivalent to an act of conversion, but, in fact, Time's reinterpretation of him began more than a month earlier. Similar processes of symbolic conversion appeared in Time when the Congress of Racial Equality elected more radical leaders. Compare, e.g., "Trouble in Alabama," 26 May 1961, p. 16, and "Chilling Shift," 10 June 1966, p. 36.